The Unitarian Calendar

The healing of the world
Is in its nameless saints. Each separate star
Seems nothing, but a myriad separate stars
Break up the night and make it beautiful.

— Bayard Taylor

Vol. 4 JANUARY — 1912 No. 5

OUR NATIONAL SOCIETIES

With headquarters in the building of the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Local offices at 104 East 20th Street, New York City; 105 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill., and 376 Sutter Street, San Francisco, Cal.

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1825.

The chief missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes books, tracts, and devotional works.

Address correspondence to the Secretary Rev. Lewis G. Wilson.

Address contributions to the Treasurer, Hon. George Hutchinson.

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The Unitarian Calendar

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AN UNSECTARIAN CHURCH

BY REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND

It was a famous saying of Dr. Bellows, of New York thirty years ago, that the Unitarian body is a sect only in its opposition to sectarianism. We all say that now, and we mean it. The Unitarian body cannot be a sect in the ordinary sense of the word, because its essentials, the only things on which it insists, are not trinity or anti-trinity, not infallibility of Bible or anti-infallibility, not any sectarian or dividing doctrine whatever, but simply those things of the moral and spiritual life which form the vital part of the religion of all the sects,—*these and these only,*—everything else being left wholly to individuals to accept or to reject, according as they seem true or false.

I do not mean that as Unitarians we do not hold definite and decided views about trinity and many other disputed doctrines. We do hold such views, and we ascribe to them a certain degree of importance. But we do not regard them as of *first* importance. We do not think them essentials of religion. Hence we do not found our churches upon them. I doubt if a single Unitarian church has been established this generation that has put into its constitution or its bond of union a word about the trinity or any other dividing doctrine. The religion to which we dedicate our churches is the religion of those spiritual verities which are the abiding life of all churches whatever their name, and which, in exact degree

that they prevail, draw all churches into a loving and harmonious brotherhood of the spirit.

It is this that fundamentally distinguishes the Unitarian body from every other Christian denomination of our time. We are an unsectarian church.

The world does not understand this. The churches around us generally do not. On the contrary, they habitually insist on interpreting the Unitarian name as having a sectarian significance, and the Unitarian movement as actuated by a dogmatic and dividing purpose. But they are mistaken.

"What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" This is Unitarianism.

"Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." This is Unitarianism.

The Beatitudes, the Golden Rule, the Lord's Prayer, and Paul's chapter on Charity—these are Unitarianism, and there is nothing else that is.

Unitarianism, understood in its true ethical and spiritual import, is the heart of both the Old Testament and the New. It is the religion of Jesus. It is the most uniting religion known, because it is the vital part of all religions. It is the eternal religion, because it builds upon no transient thing, but upon God's life in the life of men.

Every human being has not only the idea of right, but is himself capable of rectitude.

—*W. E. Channing.*

THE UNITARIAN CONCEPTION OF DIVINE SERVICE

REV. WILLIAM H. LYON, D. D.,
Of the First Parish, Brookline, Mass.

No true man can fail to wish to serve God. So much has been given to him by the divine goodness, in the way either of benefit or of opportunity, that he would be more selfish toward God than he is ever willing to be toward man if he does not do something in return. It is a matter of pride in social life to allow no service or gift to remain unreciprocated. A self-respecting man would consider himself a sort of pauper if he were willing to receive and not to give.

But what can man give to God? The old answer was to build churches, to attend worship, to praise God, to utter profuse thanks. This idea came down from the ancient idea of God as King, who loved, as human monarchs do, to be lauded, to be flattered, to have high-sounding titles piled up before Him. This was divine service.

So far as this does us good we still believe that it is serving God, since He desires us to be made better. But as we have come to see that life is more than mere keeping alive, and that God's aim in creating man is more than to provide Himself with a court and with an echo of thanks for what He has done, to fill the earth with joy and wisdom and goodness, to make it a great home for a happy and loving family, we feel that to serve God truly we must help Him to carry out His purpose. This is the true divine service. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."

Every heart contains Perfection's germ.
—*Shelley.*

PESSIMISM

Nothing to breathe but air;
Nothing to eat but food;
Nothing to wear but clothes,
To keep us from going nude.

Nothing to do but things;
Quick as a flash, they're gone!
Nowhere to fall but off;
Nowhere to sit but on;

Nothing to quench but a thirst;
Nowhere to sleep but in bed;
Nothing to have but what we've got;
Nothing to bury but dead.

Nothing to weep but tears,—
Ah me! Alas and alack!
Nowhere to go but out;
Nowhere to come but back.

Nothing to comb but our hair;
Nothing to wed but a wife.
Only to suffer and bear,—
What is the value of life?

—*Exchange.*

How can thy principles become dead, unless the thoughts which correspond to them are extinguished. But it is in my power to fan these thoughts into a continuous flame. Thou canst have that opinion about anything which thou oughtest to have. If thou canst, why art thou disturbed? —*Marcus Aurelius.*

THE "BUSINESS BASIS" FOR A CHURCH

When commercialism dominates the activities of a church, one may begin to think of the money changers of the New Testament. A church cannot be run as a matter of business.

This does not mean that the accounts must not be well kept, that the collections should not be promptly made, that the financial interests of the church should not be wisely and economically attended to. These are business methods—not business principles.

I refer to that in business which is of chief consideration—the principal thing. What is the principal thing in business?

I have heard men say they were not in business for their health, and that their business was not a charitable institution. The chief business consideration is to *make money*. That is the principal thing. The emphasis is placed first, last and always upon the making of money. "To this end was I born and to this end came I into the world," says the business man *as* a business man, "to make money."

Now what is the principal thing, so far as its finances are concerned, with the church?

It is to *spend* money. It is just the opposite of the chief consideration in business.

Any church that prides itself, primarily, upon the amount of money it has saved has allowed the money-changers to carry on their business in its inner sanctuary. The emphasis is in the wrong place. A church is a beneficence. It is its function to keep alive the God-consciousness in the souls of men, to see to it that the community gets the prophetic message. It must say, "To this end was I born and to this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth"—and the

more money it spends for this purpose the more of a church it is.

It is the function of the church to fulfill all the obligations directly or indirectly implied by the words:

"I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me."

When the treasurer of a church presents his account, it is not the gathering in of the money that should rivet the attenton. The criterion of success resides in the expenditures and the degree to which those expenditures have justified the existence of the church. Economy in business is a virtue; in a church it may be a vice.

It is the function of the church to send that, or reproduce that which is of value to it—in its pulpit, in its pews, in its influence as an inspirational force and as a repository of truth, to every creature.

It requires money to carry the kingdom of God into the mind and heart of the world. And that church which seeks how little rather than how much it can spend for that purpose is in the hypnotic grip of a blighting misconception of its mission to the world. L. G. W.

Be noble! And the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own!

Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes,
Then will pure light around thy path be shed,
And thou wilt never more be sad and lone!

—*J. R. Lowell.*

HONESTY IN RELIGION

The usual interpretation of honesty refers only to the payment of one's debts; but it has a much broader and deeper meaning—it means being *honest with ourselves; with our Creator.* The word incorporates a disposition to be upright in all things and at all times; moral rectitude and the diffusion of justice to all and with all with whom we daily come in contact. I am an optimist in that I believe that the majority of the men and women of this nation are honest; were it not so, we could not have grown so wonderfully! No nation or individual can become truly great unless their principles are founded upon the rock *Honesty.*

This matter of honesty is juggled with, however, in many so-called orthodox churches. Many subscribe to creeds which they themselves do not really believe. Think of it! Men and women *professing* to believe that which they in their hearts and souls repudiate! But a better day is dawning—its portents are observed everywhere. The religion of the future must be one of *reason* and *honesty.* There cannot, yea, must not, be one set of ethics for religion and another for secular affairs. If our religion is worth anything, it *must be* incorporated into business, political, social and religious life; in brief, it must be paramount in all phases of one's life. And so, as the world advances in secular aspects it will insist that it cares nothing for *confession* and *profession;* it will demand *commission* and *action* in our religious principles. The night of superstition, ignorance and dishonesty in religion is rapidly passing away, and we behold the dawn of a new day of honesty in all things and at all times.

WALTER C. GOLD.

Philadelphia, Pa.

SUNDAY RAIN

"Sunday Rain is so very different to any other Rain. It is so wonderfully wet, and it is so dreadfully terrorizing! The strong, the healthy, the robust, absolutely quail in abject fear and dread in the presence of Sunday Rain!

"The extraordinary fact remains that Rain on a week-day does not count. Business engagements, garden parties, amusements, weddings, funerals, royal visits, open-air political gatherings, club processions, going to see my grandmother, paying a visit to my wife's aunt's brother-in-law, all take place, Rain or no Rain, because you see it is only week-day Rain, and as a consequence it has none of the ghastly terrors of Sunday Rain. The desolating destructive power of Sunday Rain baffles description. It empties churches and destroys church life. It decreases collections, and greatly adds to the financial burdens of churches. It crushes conscience and represses the religious instinct. It is an odd thing, too, that it breeds inconsistency, for the men who stay at home because of the wet rain are mostly those who grumble that sermons are dreadfully dry. It is a fertile maker of plausible excuses, and a subtle source of ready reasoning against the habit of regular church-going; and, moreover, Sunday Rain is so insidious in its attack that one who has got into the habit of forsaking church because of the shower of Sunday Rain, by easy stages develops the faculty of discerning the arrival of the Sunday Rain hours before it comes, and will gloomily finish up a hearty breakfast with the moody remark, 'I shall not go to church this morning; I can see it's going to rain, and besides, my corn shoots so!' "

—*Church Monthly.*

UNITARIAN HYMN

Lord of all being, throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!

Sun of our life, thy quickening ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day;
Star of our hope, thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn;
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign;
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine.

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love!
Before thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame.

—*O. W. Holmes,* 1860.

Do not only take occasions of doing good when they are thrust upon thee, but study how to do all the good thou canst. Zeal of good works will make thee plot and contrive for them, consult and ask advice for them. —*Richard Baxter.*

The man who consecrates his hours
By virtuous effort and an honest aim,—
At once he draws the sting of life and death.

—*Young.*

THE DIVINE FATHERHOOD AND THE CREEDS

PROF. CLAYTON R. BOWEN,

Of the Meadville Theological School.

The statement of faith most commonly used among the free churches called Unitarian does not begin with the affirmation, "We believe in God," but with "We believe in the Fatherhood of God." Our first declaration is not concerning God's existence, but concerning his character. His existence is taken for granted, as involved in our existence as a church, in the existence of religion in human lives. What faith is primarily constrained to affirm is that the Divine Life is related to our lives as a Father to a child.

It is true that the world's creeds generally denominate God as Father, yet the free churches alone have taken the declaration in earnest. The creedal affirmations about God's treatment of men do not express fatherliness, nor are men described in terms appropriate to the children of infinite goodness and holiness. The oldest of Christian creeds begins, "I believe in God the Father Almighty," and if it stopped there it would be a far wiser and truer creed than it is. Its very next affirmation shows that the first is not to be taken in any literal sense, "And in Jesus Christ his *only* Son our Lord." The Father Almighty is the Father of *one* child; clearly the term is used theologically, having nothing to do with the personal relation of God to every living soul. The Unitarian difference is that we mean the statement very literally, as affirming the actual relation of God to each of us and to all men.

We can join in the ancient words, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth," but that is a poor expression of our religious faith. He is to us so much more than the

maker of heaven and earth. I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator and sustainer of my spirit, whose life breathes in me, whose love surrounds me like a sea, whose power upholds me in every chance and change, whose tenderness enfolds me like a mother's arms, whose wisdom guides me as it guides the worlds, to whom I am infinitely dear, who will never leave me nor forsake me, but wait a thousand eternities, if need be, until my unresting soul finds rest in him.

Certain optimistic expressions, when used without qualifying clauses, tend to mislead us. "Ever the truth comes uppermost and ever is justice done," says the optimist. "God's in his Heaven, all's right with the world." So we dismiss the appeals of truth and justice with the comforting thought that God will look after all that. Let us not deceive ourselves. While it may be true that in a general way truth and right will eventually triumph, it is also true that they will never triumph in our individual lives without intelligent and persistent effort on our part. God has not relieved us of all responsibility in this matter. Life is a stern taskmaster. The world will never be all right with us until we make it so.

—Marion Franklin Ham.

By desiring what is perfectly good, even when we do not know quite what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the power against evil, widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower.

—George Eliot.

THE PERVERSITY OF THE WILFULLY DENSE

REV. ALFRED W. BIRKS,

Of the Unity Church, Natick, Mass.

A short time ago the writer was approached by a young orthodox minister, who wished to compare his conception of the Trinity with the Unitarian definition of the Divine Being. He had just graduated from one of the big orthodox divinity schools, and he claimed to be a true exponent of its teachings. An appeal for light, sent to one of the leaders of his denomination, received a non-committal answer, accompanied by an invitation to call and discuss the matter in the privacy of the study. As this particular study was 150 miles away the young man felt disinclined to take so much exercise all at once. So he went to the nearest Unitarian minister. His Trinity was something like this: 1. The Supreme Being; 2. God revealed in history; 3. God active in the world. "In what respect," said he, "does this differ from the Unitarian idea of God?" "So far as I can see," said the writer, "there is no difference, except that you call it three while I call it one. You have mentioned but one Personality, and your Trinity is a mere division of His activity into three periods: 1. The Beginning; 2. The Past; 3. The Present. This is a mere apology for the Trinity. What about the deity of Christ?" "I do not believe in that, nor does my professor, but we do believe in the divinity." A discussion along these lines lasted about two hours, and we parted very good friends. What became of him? Oh, he was ordained to the orthodox ministry in Connecticut, and is now preaching orthodoxy in a Western State.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live.
—*Wordsworth.*

MIRACLES AS PROOFS OF RELIGION

REV. GEORGE A. THAYER, D. D.,

Of the First Congregational Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The New religion which is taking root in the most intelligent churches has much less to say about miracles as evidences of the divinity of a doctrine than used to be the case with all denominations.

Question the old Christianity, or, indeed, the old Judaism, as to its credentials of being from God, and it would point to certain accounts of marvels wrought by its founders. For the purpose of proving that God inspired it, these teachers would say: Behold the wonder of the sun stopping, iron made to swim, water turned into wine, the dead raised to life, paralytics walking with youthful vigor, and congenital deaf mutes hearing and speaking! These wonders prove that our doctrines are true!

But curiously enough, almost every alleged miracle had its scene laid in some illiterate community where belief was easy and what to our time would be absurdities passed as matters of course.

It is only where miracles have been expected that they have happened.

The wiser religious teacher stakes the worth of his faith upon the moral quality of the communities where his church has had influence; he shows how it has sweetened the life of the common man; has comforted the sorrowing, not alone among the unthinking but among the educated, has inspired heroes, has widened brotherly good will between all classes and produced enlightened and progressive nations.

Disease was once supposed to be curable chiefly by the word of some saint. Now it is carefully studied science, supported by genera-

tions of experiment with all manner of ailments, which is looked to as man's saviour from disease.

Here and there, indeed, some magical word may carry relief to the sick, but for one so cured, millions look to the trained physician, whose skill is utterly independent of his theology. Orthodoxy of creed does not guarantee surgical or healing genius, while heresy is often associated with marvelous insight into the cause and cure of pain.

Miracles are rarely looked for now, and the accounts of them are correspondingly few. And the religion which proclaims them is apt to be suspected of fraud.

Men say we are born selfish, avaricious, lustful, and cannot be otherwise. We can be! And the first thing is to feel in our heart of hearts that we ought to be,—and the iron weight of that obligation will transform us and give us its iron strength. —*W. M. Salter.*

NOTES

The Unitarian Congregational Church of Rochester, N. Y., sends out each year an interesting parish directory containing names of all the members of the church, with addresses. A handsome half-tone picture of the church adorns the cover, and an excellent photograph of the Gannett House also appears in the pamphlet. Several pages are occupied by the "Calendar for the Coming Year," showing a diversity of interests and a regularity of administration which is surprising in its efficiency, covering as it does every imaginable feature of the church life and work. Surely

The church in Rochester is a living instrument for the well-being of the city and the propagation of liberal religious influences.

We are glad to learn that the Rev. John W. Day, of St. Louis, after a continued illness is able to again occupy his pulpit and go on with the manifold duties of his parish.

In a recent visit to the Church of the Messiah in St. Louis the Rev. Elmer S. Forbes, Secretary of the Social and Public Service Department, not only lectured, but inspected the work which has been for so many years carried on in that place. Mr. Forbes also visited the Church of the Unity in St. Louis, of which Rev. George R. Dodson is pastor, and reports great enthusiasm and efficiency of service.

The First Unitarian Society of Hood River, Ore., has recently observed a unique event called "The Conference of the Full Moon." During this Conference many practical and inspiring addresses were delivered. Among the subjects which were considered were "The Peace Treaties With England and France," "Civic Righteousness," "What Does My Church Mean to Me?" "What Kind of Preaching Is Most Valuable?" together with a discussion of the finances of the church, interspersed with music and other exercises.

News reaches us from Dallas, Texas, of recent meetings of the Unitarian Church Club. A wide range of subjects was considered, all tending toward the uplift of the community. The meetings were open to the general public and treated

such matters as "Evolution," "Education," "The Moral Aspect of Politics," "What Is to Be the Religion of the Future?" "The Nature of Human Conscience," "The Playground Movement," "An Interpretation of Browning's Poetry and Philosophy," "How to Improve the Social and Civic Condition in Dallas," and "What Constitutes Good Citizenship?" This club has started a social centre movement in Dallas, in which the citizens and various churches of the city have been invited to co-operate.

We have been much pleased with a recent report of the work in the young church at Boise, Idaho. Among features that might be mentioned is that of the Children's Church. The membership of the original Sunday school has thus been doubled. There is an orchestra from the senior contingent, and much music and song during each service. Then follows a Bible lesson given by Mrs. Pickett or a member of the congregation, several hymns and a ten-minute children's sermon or explanation of the Bible study. During this part of the service the infant class is taught and entertained in the study, or, weather permitting, out in the sunshine. One gentleman, a member of the church, hearing many good things said about the Children's Church presented the children's minister with a substantial sum of money in token of his appreciation.

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